



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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REPRESENTATIVE EDWIN VARGAS
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Committee Chairs, Sen. Gerratana, Rep. Johnson, Vice Chairs, Sen. Slossberg, Rep. Miller, Ranking Members Sen. Welch, Rep. Srinivasan and all committee members, my name is Edwin Vargas and I am honored to represent the sixth assembly district in the City of Hartford. I want to thank you for the opportunity to express my support of **HB 6519, An Act Concerning the Labeling of Genetically Engineered Food**, which I have co-signed.

The population I represent has been saturated with a flood of unhealthy foods and we have seen the consequences of this over the years with increasing rates of obesity, diabetes and other diet related illnesses. The cost to our healthcare providers has been astronomical and it continues to rise faster than the rate of inflation. Yet today we are confronting a far greater challenge to our food supply than any other we have ever faced in human history; the wholesale introduction of genetically modified foods.

It is alarming to me that our federal government has allowed these new and poorly understood products to be marketed to the American consumer without the proper long term research of their impact on people or on the potential genetic mutations to our wildlife as these organisms inevitably migrate. While I would like to go much further on this issue I am only asking my colleagues to consider the bill before you which simply allows Connecticut residents to make informed choices as to what they personally consume and as to what they feed their families. If one chooses not to allow oneself or one's family to be used as a guinea pig for the sake of corporate profits one should have the right to make that decision. If we keep the consumer in the dark we are denying them the right to decide what goes into their own and into their loved ones diet. I believe this to be criminal in the spirit if not in the letter of the law.

You may hear from the industry that there is no danger. I do not believe this to be the case, but even if you allow for the possibility of uncertainty, I urge you to consider that when it comes to our health if were to be judged to have made a mistake it would better to have erred on the side of caution. I ask all my legislative colleagues to defend our constituents' right to know what is in their food and support this bill. Thank You.